

# Textworlds in interplay: The rhetoric of film induced tourism

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**Keywords** | Film tourism, semiotics, cognitive poetics, destination marketing, tourism promotion

**Objectives** | The main goal of this paper is to examine how Lyme Regis, a coastal town in the South of England is portrayed in the film *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, directed by Karel Reisz (1981), based on the novel by the same name by John Fowles, and how this dramatic and breathtaking depiction contributes to the marketing of the image of the location as a tourist destination (Beeton, 2005). The reason underlying the selection of the film, unlike other films researched by studies on film-induced tourism (e.g. Carvalho, Vieira & Sousa, 2013, 2014; Sousa & Carvalho, 2016; Sousa & Marinho, 2014), owes to the fact that it is a fictional story set in Lyme Regis focusing on character and plot rather than on location. Yet, as will be shown, the film succeeds in giving viewers an appealing image of the town through a combination of language and symbols, both verbal and non-verbal (visual), as well as affect combined with cognitive triggering (Buckland, 2003 [2000]). It is thus a second goal of this paper to illustrate how films focusing on aesthetic engagement can nonetheless provide opportunities for destination marketing from a film-induced tourism perspective.

**Methodology** | This study on co-creative food experiences is still in progress. A literature review on co-creation experiences and on food tourism was developed in order to identify key elements required to improve a food tourism experience and to develop co-creative food experiences. A secondary data analysis, based on web-information retrieval and netnographic approaches with respective content analysis to identify key components (already referred to in the literature review) of a particular Portuguese co-creative food experiences- "Taste of Lisboa Food Tours". Also links of the food experience to local culture and other aspects of the destination experience are studied, as well as the reactions of the public regarding the particular offerings, as available in a food and tourism-related online forum (Tripadvisor).

**Main Results and Contributions** | Overall, it was found that the film is successful in creating a representation of Lyme Regis which may appeal to different audiences. These can be characterised as travelers who either become curious about the town based on what they see on screen or are drawn to Lyme Regis wishing to visit filming sites and/or to experience the story's ambience as a form of participatory

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fan culture (Robertson & Grady, 2015). Evidence can be found in online comments containing overt references to the film, its actors and the experience of being immersed in its atmosphere. Furthermore, some tourism services, namely a restaurant and a guided tour service, have been found to explicitly capitalize on the film. All of this is believed to be accountable in terms of specific references and inferences viewers must draw from what they see in the film should they have no prior knowledge of the location. Others who already know the town are nonetheless primed by the film to undergo processes of schema accretion and/or refreshment (Stockwell, 2002, 2003, 2009). Attending to the film's portrayal of the town, both situations are believed to be beneficial in terms of destination image promotion.

**Limitations** | While this study is able to suggest the ways in which viewers are led to construe Lyme Regis and how that makes them susceptible to marketing campaigns, it can only account for a general base-line model of the viewer and, due to constraints in both space and methodology, is unable to provide in-depth analyses pertaining to different subcategories of tourists. Future studies could adopt a discourse-based view of language and draw on the statistical methods of corpus linguistics to identify patterns in consumers' online comments.

**Conclusions** | In sum, this paper has looked into how a film the main focus of which was not on location may still be used as a persuasive means in disseminating a positive image of a tourist destination. In so doing, a new approach drawing on insights developed in semiotics and cognitive science has been successfully applied, thus suggesting new methodological avenues for future research as well as contributing to the advancement of the already eclectic and fast evolving field of studies on film tourism.

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